DUPLEX PERSONALITY.—ITS RELATION TO HYPNOTISM AND TO LUCIDITY.¹

By R. OSGOOD MASON, M.D.

New York.

ABSTRACT.

AFTER a hundred years of obloquy hypnotism is accepted as a fact in mental science, and being so accepted its claim to consideration and an honorable place are two-fold: first, on account of its practical value as a therapeutic agent, and second, on account of its philosophical value as a key to many phenomena which have formerly been rejected altogether, or else have been looked upon as supernatural. Amongst these unusual phenomena two of the most striking and important are duplex or multiplex personality, and lucidity or clairvoyance.

The systematic study of duplex personality is only of very recent date; but material has now been collected which demands careful study. Three cases are selected as typical examples—that of Félicité X., reported by Dr. Azam, of Bordeaux; that of Ansel Bourne, reported by Dr. Hodgson, Secretary of the American Branch of the Society for Psychical Research, and that of Alma Z., reported by the author of the paper, in the *JOURNAL OF NERVOUS AND MENTAL DISEASE* for September, 1893. In each of these cases, from some physical cause, such as sickness, debility or shock, loss of consciousness occurred, and when consciousness returned it was found to be a consciousness altogether different from that which existed before: the patient looked, talked and acted altogether like a different person, and this new consciousness or self claimed no partnership, no kinship and very little acquaintance even with the original personality, but on the contrary, it claimed to be an entirely independent person. In some cases as, for instance, that of Félicité X., the primary self was weak, sickly, melancholy

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and indolent ; while that which came to take its place was in good health, cheerful and industrious. The two states alternated frequently, the second state often continuing for days and even months together. During all this time the primary consciousness was abolished, and when it returned it had no knowledge whatever of what had transpired in the second state, but all the time so occupied was a blank. On the other hand, all the different occasions upon which this second consciousness came into action were linked together in one connected and consistent chain of memory, having related thoughts, the same sentiments, opinions, code of morals, virtues, vices, and the same general character and personal history, but all entirely different and often altogether opposite to the sentiments, personal history and opinions of the original self. It presents all the characteristics of a real and distinct personality, and it has been variously designated as, (1) a different stratum of consciousness ; (2) a subliminal self ; (3) a second personality.

Having differentiated such a second condition or personality, we look for other cases having analogies to these rarer types, and the first and most obvious is the condition of ordinary somnambulism. Here we have the same general conditions which marked the cases already referred to. First, the primary consciousness is blotted out ; second, another consciousness or personality takes its place ; third, all the different occasions upon which the second consciousness appears are linked together in one consistent chain of memory, constituting a personality perfectly distinct from the primary one.

Looking still further we find instances where the same conditions are brought about by means of hypnotism. A marked example of this is presented in Dr. Richet's case of Madame B. Here three distinct personalities successively appeared. Madame B., or Léonie, a very modest, dull and common-place French peasant woman, forty-five years of age, being hypnotized, became a flippant, forward, frolicksome young woman whom the professor named Léontine. Upon further hypnotization and a deeper trance there appeared a sedate, very proper and much more intellectual person who was named Léonore. All these personalities were separate and distinct, had their own characteristics and peculiarities with which they were always consistent. Léonie knew nothing of Léontine nor of Léonore. Léontine, the second personality, knew of Léonie who preceded her,

but not of Léonore who came after her. While Léonore knew both Léonie and Léontine—and each was desirous not to be confounded with the others. Ansel Bourne also passed at once from the primary to the second personality by hypnotism, and then related all the incidents which occurred during six weeks spent previously in that condition as A. J. Brown.

We find this second personality coming to the surface under at least these three conditions, namely: physical weakness, sickness or shock—ordinary somnambulism and in the hypnotic trance.

We find this subliminal self active also in sleep when no active somnambulism is present, especially in veridical dreams, and also in reverie or the condition between sleeping and waking when the ordinary consciousness is quiescent; and well authenticated examples are given. In some of these states and especially in somnambulism, reverie and the hypnotic condition we find the subliminal self possessed of unusual or supra-normal perceptive powers—it is able to go away hundreds of miles, see what is transpiring and report it automatically through the physical organization or impress it upon the primary consciousness in various ways. Examples of the exercise of this faculty are given, occurring especially in dreams and in the hypnotic trance.

Alleged facts of this kind are not received by the strictly physiological school of psychologists, but facts are facts, whether received or not, and apart from any theory regarding it, the fact of visual perception gained where vision by the physical organ of sight is impossible, is just as well established as any fact in nature. Cases were reported by Dr. Dufay before the Psychological Society of which Charcot was President at the time. Dr. Backman, of Sweden, found several cases of clairvoyance amongst his own patients; many cases have been carefully reported to the Society for Psychical Research and the writer of the paper himself has had an excellent example within the past year in a patient under his own observation.

The writer draws the following conclusions.

1. That there does exist in some persons and probably in all a subliminal self or second personality which is able to act at a distance from the physical body and which is endowed with perceptive powers exceeding those of the primary self.

2. That clairvoyance is an attribute of the subliminal self—and in that view is a perfectly reasonable and a proper subject of scientific study.

3. That hypnotism is a means of experimentally bringing into action this subliminal self with its added powers of perception.

Without presuming to dogmatize, the writer is certain that a sufficient number of well-observed and authenticated facts have now been accumulated relating to the subjects here treated to demand the candid and careful consideration of medical men; and it was with hope of giving definiteness to such consideration that he ventured to bring the subject before the Association.

A Case of Agoraphobia.—Taylor (*N. Y. Medical Journal*, March 30, 1895), reports the case of a man, aged twenty-six years, who consulted him for "nervousness." The attacks were described as "horrible feelings of fear with palpitation of the heart," occurring when about to cross a street or square, or when left alone in any large open space. The first attack came on five years previously when about to set out for a walk over an extensive plain. Patient attributes this to the loss of an old friend who had accompanied him everywhere. He has always been in good health, but has lately suffered from constipation and indigestion, and since puberty has been subject to recurrent attacks of acne. Was treated three years previously for "soft sore," but never had any secondary symptoms. Is temperate, but a heavy consumer of cigarettes, smoking an ounce of Turkish tobacco daily. There are no evidences of organic disease. He is intelligent and well educated, and a clerk by occupation. In this instance the man was haunted by the fear of insanity suggested to him by some indiscreet practitioner. The author reassured him about his fear of insanity; he was advised to take as much exercise as possible without physical or mental fatigue, to fight against the ideas at every opportunity, to prevent constipation and to moderate the use of tobacco. A sea voyage was also suggested. A short time after he was seen again, but his condition was unchanged. He says he feels more confident of overcoming the attacks altogether, a confidence which the author does not share.

FREEMAN.